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LETTERS

Colonial Newsletter Editor:

In reference to the new Fugio reverse 'J' as published in the April 1961 issue, Vol 2, No. 2, I think you'll find after studying this coin, that it is actually reverse 'I'. Die damages, unlike die breaks (which grow in extent with further use of the die), tend to be less evident as the die continues to be used. Thus if reverse 'I' was damaged, and was continued in use until this damage was no longer in evidence, and was then damaged again, the result would be, as in this case, the same die, but with different damage marks. This coin should therefore be listed as a new combination, 17-I. The 'J' reverse still remains unassigned.

Richard Picker



Sequential page 48

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☐ HUMDINGERS AND BUZZERS ☐

The finding of Early American Coins with two holes punched through them is not at all an uncommon occurrence. Generally the finder says such mutilation was done to convert the piece into a button, and thus it is an item of great monetary value. He never stops to think that only a button of this size would be required to trim a Great Coat for the Cardiff Giant! Not only would such a button be double the size of an ordinary button, it would also be impractical to use. The thicknesses of materials then in vogue required metal buttons to have an eye or stem soldered on the back, and it was through this eye that most colonial buttons were sewn to the cloth or leather.

The writer believes that early coins with double punch holes and oftentimes notched edges were made solely for the purpose of amusing children. They should be evaluated simply as kids toys, - nothing more, nothing less. To test the hypothesis, I put a piece of string through my 1787 Machins Mills Tory Cent (see accompanying illustration), and asked my young son what the contraption was. "Where did you get the humdinger, Dad?" "Why do you call it that, son?" "Because it makes a funny humming sound if you hold one end of the looped string in each hand, sling the coin around until the string is tightly twisted, then snap out the loop to unwind it rapidly." Thus to my surprise and amazement I found out how to hum a humdinger!

Illustrated for variety are two other nice examples of early humdingers. The 1787 Connecticut piece, Miller 28-n, is from the collection of the American Numismatic Society. It shows how the two holes were made by some circular, tapered punch, - not drilled through. The other piece is interesting because the coin is a 1787 New Jersey, 'Maris 72-z which has been double struck, obverse to reverse, over a 1787 Connecticut issue, Miller 33(16)-Z(15).

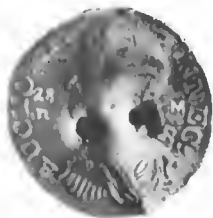
The New-York Historical Society Quarterly Bulletin, Vol. IV, No. 4 (Jan., 1921) p. 100, contains an authoritative article by W. L. Calver entitled, "Children's Toys Found in Revolutionary Camps". Illustrated are two XVIII Century New York buzzers which are only refinements of the older type of humdinger. The former were made by serrating the edge of a disk with a saw file in order to produce a louder whirring sound than that generated by a smooth edged periphery. The article reads, in part:

"Conspicuous amongst the objects relating to the juvenile population of the camps are the twine-driven buzzers, made of lead - probably from a flattened bullet. Several of these buzzers - thin leaden disks with serrated edges, and having two perforations near their centers, have been found within the Manhattan Island Camp. Another one - an oddity in its way, was recently found on a Revolutionary site at Tippet's Hill at Spuyten Duyvil. This specimen has the usual sawtooth edge, but the teeth are bent outward right and left alternately, after the manner of a circular saw, to augment the buzz. A buzzer from a British Camp near Richmond, Staten Island, has the serrated edge, and was made from a worn-out half-penny of William III." The latter two specimens are the ones illustrated.

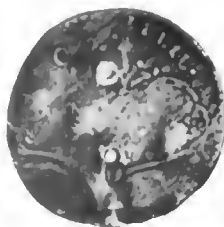
How many genuine humdingers and buzzers do you have in your box of mutilated Colonials? Don't discard these pieces with which so much past romance is connected.

Edward R. Barnsley

EXAMPLES OF EARLY AMERICAN HUNDINGERS



1787 CONN. Miller 28-n



1787 NEW JERSEY Maris 72-z over Miller 33(16)-Z(15)



☐ NEW VIRGINIA REVERSE ☐

I have recently discovered a new Virginia Reverse V, which is combined with the newly discovered Obverse 13 described in an earlier Colonial Newsletter. The coin is Red Unc. and shows no evidence of circulation. Its excellent state of preservation probably associates it with the Cohen Hoard.

Eric P. Newman describes Reverse V as follows: (which will appear in his forthcoming supplement to Virginia Coinage)

8 String Harp

V is low and tilts right. Leaf ends opposite left end of base of first I. Second I touches arm. Third I slopes down to right, relating to horizontal divider. Large Lion clear of line. Going from top down, tail ends of three small lions are successively nearer the line. Leaf close to and ends opposite center of bases of A. Periods, barely higher than center lines.

Ted Craigie



Variety 13-V



● ● MORE COMMENTS ON THE FUGIO CENTS OF 1787 ● ●

The Z Reverse

Few of the reverse varieties of the Fugio Cents of 1787 exhibit any special features other than the positions of the letters in the motto WE ARE ONE. The one outstanding exception to this statement is the Z reverse.

The Z reverse, so far as I have been able to determine, has been only partially described in the literature. The Guide Book describes it as "Label with raised rims (simply two concentric circles). Large letters in WE ARE ONE." In his Varieties of the Fugio Cent, Newman states "Inside and outside edges of band are raised. Lettering of WE ARE ONE larger and thicker." S. S. Crosby in his Early Coins of America does not even mention this variety and apparently did not know of its existence. This is strange in light of the fact that it is not an exceptionally rare variety.

The accompanying photograph is an enlargement of the Z reverse. I hope that the features which I am about to discuss will be distinct.

Previous descriptions only partially touch on the interesting aspects of the Z reverse. The first point of interest is that not only are the inside and outside edges of the band "raised", but the edges of the letters in STATES UNITED are also "raised". On close examination it is found that neither edges or rims are in fact raised but only appear as such because of the effective removal of material between the edges of the letters and the rims. The letter edges are not as prominent as the edges of the band because they are only approximately one-half the width and one-half the height (measured to their respective fields).

The next point concerns the cinquefoils which do not have raised edges but do have additional ornamentation at each side, a feature which does not appear on any other variety. This consists of four dashes in a diamond or cruciform configuration at each side of each cinquefoil, for a total of sixteen dashes. I have not definitely decided whether these were done with a single tool or with a punch having the four dash pattern, but suspect that a single tool was used. On some Z reverses I have been unable to find any trace of some of these marks. I shall mention the possible significance of this later.

The letters WE ARE ONE are hand cut and are exceptionally large in comparison with the punched letters on the other reverses. Several other cutting errors can be seen about the W, A, and O on excellent specimens. In addition, the upper face of each letter indicate an attempt to execute a style similar to that of the hand cut lettering of the motto MIND YOUR BUSINESS as it appears on the No. 1 obverse. A similar style also appears on the face of the letters of WE ARE ONE on the CC pattern reverse. This font design apparently proved too difficult and the letters were recut to flatten the faces.

I mentioned in my earlier comments (July 1961 issue of The Colonial Newsletter) that all the reverse dies with the exception of the Z die originated with a common hub. I have now concluded that the Z reverse represents a die which also had its origin in the master hub used for all the other regular reverse dies, but which went through several stages of rework including an intaglio, in an attempt to produce a working hub having all lettering on the hub. This would eliminate the need for any additional hand work on dies produced from the hub. This may in fact have been accomplished with the result that more than one Z variety exists. The cinquefoil ornamentation, the sixteen dashes, may represent a mark - or arrangement of marks - to distinguish one die from another and might explain the difficulty in finding some of these marks on some Z reverses. One of the areas which indicate multistep rework are the links in the chain. These are somewhat thinner than those on other reverses, and the various characteristic features of individual links, such as the heavy cuts between links 12 and 13, 5 and 6, and 7 and 8, are missing. Photographic overlays of the Z reverse with other reverses show remarkable correspondence of link centers and band lettering, which leads toward my conclusion that the Z die evolved from the same master hub.

Another feature of the links is the easily visible shortcoming of the master hub (and light sinkings) which resulted in the disappearance of links as they begin to pass under successive links, especially at the outside or top of the links. These areas have been extensively corrected on the Z variety and resulted in a "raised" edge effect at this point on each link. Similar corrections are visible on several links at the inside or bottom position.

In the center of several links, in particular link No. 10, appears a slightly elevated point of metal which might indicate the addition of a mullet and its subsequent incomplete removal. Or it could represent simply an accumulation or loss of metal depending on when it occurred during the reworking process.

Thinning of the rings would have been most easily accomplished on a hub as would the removal of material between the STATES UNITED and the edge of the band. The addition of the WE ARE ONE would have been most easily accomplished on an intaglio. The apparent difficulty in styling the tops of the letters WE ARE ONE could be a result of the problems of working with deep incuse lettering on an intaglio.

My theory on this sequence is the following: (1) The regular master hub was used to produce an intaglio to which the WE ARE ONE was added and the original cutting errors between links removed. (2) A working hub was then produced from the intaglio. The links of the chain were thinned and the "raised" edges of the band and STATES UNITED were produced by removal of metal from this hub. (3) The dies were sunk next and the dashes added beside the cinquefoils. Deepening of the link edges may have been accomplished at this point. Somewhere in this sequence mullets may have been added to the centers of each link and subsequently removed.

Finally, the milled borders - as on all the dies - were hand worked into the die and this fact may permit a final determination as to whether more than one Z die actually exists; however, borders on some dies were reworked during the life of the dies and this possibility must be considered in the case of the Z die.

The Z reverse occurs in both regular and upset positions in combination with the No. 19 obverse. 12-Z occurs in the upset position but I do not know whether it occurs in the regular position. I have no information on the 1-Z orientations and would appreciate this information from readers who may have 1-Z in their collections.

In conclusion, the Z reverse is unquestionably the most interesting of the regular reverses. It should perhaps be considered as a pattern, but too many specimens exist for this classification, I believe. Other interesting reverses are of course the A and Y reverses. These however are simply a change, or most likely a mistake, in the orientation of the die or punch during punching of the A die, and the use of star punch over the existing cinquefoil on the Y die. Except for clicking marks and minor rework on some varieties, there is very little else of significance with the exception of a few unusual effects caused by warped dies.

One final observation and question regarding the Z reverse. Why is it a STATES UNITED variety? In the resolution of the Congressional Committee entered in the Journal of Congress and quoted by S. S. Crosby page 298, -- "a small circle in the middle, with the words 'United States', round it" -- To fit convention this requires that United should be on the left and States on the right. If one concludes that the STATES UNITED varieties were simply punched (the motto WE ARE ONE) with the die 180° from the proper position, or perhaps with the R punch (which I believe was always used first) rotated to an incorrect position, then how would this mistake have possibly occurred when the motto was hand cut as in the case of the Z reverse? Questions such as these are one of many reasons for my interest in the Fugios.

Several points have been raised by readers regarding some of my statements in my first series of comments and are of sufficient interest to warrant further comment here.

One writer asked why so many specimens of Fugio Cents are found with clicking marks whereas other similar coinage have none, or at least none recorded. I have two comments on this point. First, other similar coinages do have clicking marks but they are not as obvious as those on the Fugios. A 10 X magnification glass and care with lighting will reveal many interesting points which most collectors have never seen on their coins. Secondly, Crosby states that the Fugios were struck on a drop press. (Quotation - paragraph 3, p. 302). I believe that this was indeed the case and these clicking marks serve as proof. I have not been able to obtain much detail regarding the design of such presses other than that there were two basic types - one which had a free falling weight with die attached, and another with a mechanical arm and coun-

terbalance linkage. The first type might have been dropped accidentally onto the lower die when no planchet was in place. Or it may have dropped and struck a planchet - bounced - flipped the coin out and the dies come back together again. I have seen a number of double struck pieces which are the result of "bounce". The linkage type drop press would be subject to the same action. I do not believe that screw presses, which were used during this same period, would be subject to this action, or at least not to the same extent. Accidental dropping could not occur and the equivalent action would be much less likely. The various coinages reportedly struck on screw presses are seldom found with clicking marks. Some of the Fugio dies show as many as eight separate and distinct sets of clicking marks as a function of time. These do not all appear at one time of course, but were generated and then either worked out of the dies or eliminated during the generation of a new set. Sometimes an old set remained after a new set was generated. This resulted in some unusual effects such as the three eyed suns which appear on some B reverses.

Finally, in part II, I mentioned that the hub cutting error was covered on each die with an ornament punch. I should have added that this was not done in the case of the "club ray" obverses, numbers 2, 3, 4 and 5. The "club ray" Fugios represent a remarkable departure from the other Fugios in many more respects than the ray structure and I will mention these in future comments.

James C. Spilman
Little Rock, Arkansas



Fugio Reverse Z



THE FRENCH COLONIES SOUS of 1767

by Robert A. Vlack

Part III

This is the third article of this series and I want to point out a little variation here. You will notice that if the series were continued sequentially the next number would be the 4-D, however, no specimens of the 4-D without the "RF" Counterstamp have been located to date. These coins undoubtedly exist, however, for the present I shall omit this variety and continue with the 5-E and so on. If I run out of varieties before the 4-D turns up without the counterstamp, then I shall picture and describe this variety with the counterstamp. Now to continue with the varieties.

- Obverse 5 - In COLONIES, O is closer to C, NI is high with the I closer to N. End of right base of E becomes defective. In FRANCOISES, C is closer to O, E leans right. In L.XV, period is closer to arms, base of XV is below base of L. The L, X and V all lean slightly left. The "A" mintmark leans strongly left.
- Reverse E - In SIT, T is low. NOMEN is well spaced with the O defective on top. In DOMINI, DOM is widely spaced, MI is close and connected at the base, 2nd I is high and about parallel with the N. In BENEDICTUM, D is slightly low and leans right, I is slightly high, and U is closer to T. The I develops a break on top, and breaks develop between U and T which later connect to the wreath. Top of crown is closer to the S. The l is slightly distant from the 7 and leans left. The leaf ends under the left side of the l.
- Obverse 6 - In COLONIES, 2nd O is closer to L, I leans slightly left, and S is low. The C is defective. In FRANCOISES, R leans right, left upright of N is low, I is high, and the C is defective. In L.XV, L leans left, period is midway, and the base of XV is slightly below the base of L. Chip breaks occur below the period.
- Reverse F - In SIT, I leans slightly left. In NOMEN, O is closer to N, left upright of both N's low. In DOMINI, D is large, 1st I is slightly high, 2nd I is parallel with N. In Bxxxx BENEDICTUM, 1st E is slightly low, D is large, and T and M lean right. A defect occurs between the E and D which appears to be a misplaced I. Top of crown is closer to S and is slightly above the base of the legend. Leaf ends under the left center of l. Right side of crown not connected to the center upright.
- Obverse 7 - In COLONIES, C is low, L is high and closer to 2nd O, I is high, and S leans right. In FRANCOISES, R is very high, A leans left, and 1st S leans right. The accent just touches the bottom of C. In L.XV, the L leans slightly left, the period is slightly high and closer to the arms. The V leans right with respect to X. A chip break occurs between the right leg of the "A" mintmark and the arms.
- Reverse G - In SIT, I and T lean left with T slightly low and almost parallel with I. The top of T may be defective at its center. In NOMEN, O is slightly closer to N and is slightly larger than N or M with base of O extending below. M leans slightly right. In DOMINI, the M and I are connected at the base, with the 2nd I parallel with N. In BENEDICTUM, B leans slightly right, I, C, and T lean left. A break connects T and U on top. Top of crown is closer to S. Leaf ends under center of l. Left side of l may be defective.

THE FRENCH COLONIES SOUS of 1767



5-E



6-F



7-G

